

U.S. KEEPS SECRET OF PW RANSOM

Mum Is the \$1 Million Word

BY PHILIP MEYER
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WASHINGTON—Atty. Gen. Robert Kennedy intends to keep the secret of the million-dollar donor who saved the Cuban prisoner exchange at the last minute.



R. KENNEDY

Sooner or later, the Republicans can be expected to give him a hard time about it.

The money was pledged on Christmas Eve by a personal friend of the attorney general after Castro threatened to halt the exchange unless he received \$2,900,000 in cash.

Justice Department spokesman Edwin O. Guthman said Wednesday that the donor insisted on remaining anonymous as a condition of the pledge. The other \$1,900,000 was raised by the Cuban Families Advisory Committee, a group of private citizens.

Gen. Lucius D. Clay, who led the committee's efforts, said none of its donors have requested similar anonymity. But he has not decided whether to release their names, he said.

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THE JUSTICE Department's role in the prisoner ransom had become generally known when the last-minute snag occurred. Therefore, the man who came up with the

mysterious million so quickly, saved the administration potential embarrassment.

Republicans will want to know whether he was someone who is likely to get a favor in return. This possibility was vigorously denied Wednesday by Guthman.

"There was no conceivable conflict of interest in this thing," he said. "The donor is not involved in politics and had nothing to gain or lose."

THE UNNAMED giver is not involved in any litigation relating to the Justice Department, nor does he do business with the government, he said.



GEN. CLAY

Guthman also stated that no Kennedy family money was involved in the \$2,900,000 ransom.

"There's no reluctance on the part of the Justice Department" to reveal the donor's identity, he said. "It's just what the man asked."

No one expects the opposition party to leave it at that. But before pressing the issue, Republicans may wait for the good feeling generated by the release and by President Kennedy's Miami speech to subside.

"The timing is wrong now," explained GOP National Chairman William Miller. He said it in the quiet voice of one who is idly twirling a blackjack.